

power to preserve Medicare and Medicaid for future generations.

#### FUNDING ISSUES

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago, we passed a major omnibus appropriations bill, of which I had the privilege of submitting over 30 requests. Frankly, I am thankful for the funding I received on behalf of the 18th Congressional District of Texas. It is a tradition that I pride myself in. I also take pride in the work of the Appropriations Committee in working on behalf of the American people.

It is also important to take note of the fact that—as we have done positive things, it is also important to note some issues that I have concern with.

First of all, I want to acknowledge that there is no limit for the funding for Planned Parenthood, which is part of my constituency, which helps young women with their health. There is opioid funding and VA funding. I am most happy with the childcare funding and for TIGER grants.

But what we need more of, even though we had 450,000 new certificates for the disabled, is Section 8 vouchers for seniors and families. We need to be able to insist that the quality of housing is best.

As I finish, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that in the effort to stop school gun violence, I am disappointed that there are no civil rights protections to make sure we aren't pointing out Hispanics and Latinos differently from other children, as well as no DACA relief for our children.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will recognize Members for Special Order speeches without prejudice to the resumption of legislative business.

#### NORTH KOREA DIPLOMACY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to come to the American people because I truly believe that when it comes to the national security of this Nation, we are of one belief, one faith, and singularly committed to the security of each and every American. I know that because our hearts break when any of our men and women fall in battle while wearing that uniform.

I have spent a lot of time with families who have lost loved ones throughout the wars that have occurred during

my tenure in the United States Congress. I have been to the veterans' cemetery. I have joined my neighbors on Memorial Day. I have held my own Memorial Day commemoration for at least the last 5 years. Neighbors have come out from all over the community to honor those who live and served our Nation, but those who have fallen as well.

I believe it is important, then, to evidence in your congressional work as well as evidence in this country, through the leaders who are serving this Nation, being truthful as well as diplomatic. I have no quarrel with the issues of diplomacy.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I have no quarrel with the idea of diplomacy. I believe that even your enemies deserve the opportunity to explain themselves.

So, as Secretary Tillerson had mentioned some months ago, he was interested in some encounter with North Korea. He described that it would take some time and that some initial meetings make sense.

We have not been able to change the minds of the North Koreans and their attitudes toward nuclear proliferation for decades, though we came close during the time of President William Jefferson Clinton, but counsel advised him not to go further. I am sure he reflects on that. All of us wonder. That was with the father, Kim Jong-un.

Diplomacy is a reputable and reasonable approach to safeguard and secure the American people. I have taken on the responsibility as someone who has served on the Homeland Security Committee since the heinous, tragic terrorist act of 9/11—and I now serve on the Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee, having served on the Transportation and Protective Security Subcommittee as chair, and on the Immigration and Border Security Subcommittee—and I share the importance of our national security.

Now, as the ranking member of the Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations Subcommittee, where it is important as well to assess the threats against United States, I have come to believe the importance of developing an expertise in these national security issues so that we can share with our constituents and also advocate here in the Congress what more we should be doing. I truly believe that we should be doing more.

So, before I frame the complete aspects of my discussion that will involve

Trump and the need to protect the independence of the special counsel, but, more importantly, Trump and Russia and the intertwining of the highest office in the land and the actions of Putin's Russia and the actions of Vladimir Putin, most of us have known the idea of the Soviet Union and Russia for most of our lives. Russia is somewhat of a new phenomena, as the Soviet Union was broken up. The memories of the Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain and the idea of an insulated, frightening, frozen land that did not allow any of its subjects, including the many countries that came under the Soviet Union, to speak a word, silent or not, against the government, was a fearsome and fearful place.

If history recounts, that was the Cold War. That was a moment in time for schoolchildren taking cover under. That was the time of President Kennedy's actions and almost the brink of war with Khrushchev. Those were moments the American people could understand. They demanded that the United States not be frail or a failure against Russia.

I do not ignore World War II, when Russia was a collaborator in the efforts of the allies. I don't ignore that. But after that time, it was their choice to stand up against the world and to stand up in a frightening way until the doors seemingly began to crack open.

I, for one, as a student, welcomed and cherished that possibility that Russia would turn to democratic ways—at least, ways of giving opportunity to its people, giving them free speech, giving them the ability to make decisions for themselves, and to vote in fair elections.

For a period of time, that was seemingly the direction that they were going after President Reagan said: "Tear down that wall."

What a bright light. I think it is important to note these Republican and Democratic Presidents who understood what our role was and is.

What is America's role?

If you travel in the most limited way, no matter what continent you go to, you will find that the people of the continent look to America for hope, for the standard bearer of democracy and human rights.

□ 1345

And if no one else turns on the light and shines it on the dastardly behavior of the despotic leaders, they can always count on America to make a difference.

That is what I have grown to know as a Member of the United States Congress. That is the side of the line on which I have stood. Not out of anger, not out of disregarding the differences of world leaders, but of recognizing what America's responsibility is and how disappointed and hurt I am that we find ourselves perplexed.

The world is perplexed. Ask any diplomatic traveler coming back from any conference, country, meeting, outside

of the United States. Do a poll at the international airports from New York to Washington to Houston. They will tell you that the world asks: What in the world is going on? Because, for one, they don't have that voice of reason in the United States foreign policy coming out of the White House. They do not see that standard bearer of standing up for human rights and women's rights, of understanding their plight. And in particular, they don't understand why our voice is silence.

Now, let me compliment many of the former members of Cabinets, going as far back, I guess, as Reagan and beyond, who are still speaking about our true values, of the whole issue of dealing with those who are evil and confronting them outright. Mr. Speaker, I am not suggesting that we turn toward every moment. We all have our differences of opinion on the Iraq war and Afghanistan, although we never disagree on the blood that was shed by our soldiers and those who are on the battle line. We ask the question: What was the ultimate result?

But still, people, even in those times of consternation, they said, well, America was trying to do right, trying to bring democracy or stability or speaking out against the despotic leaders and not shying away from doing that. They were speaking out against Saddam, Gaddafi, without any embarrassment. They weren't congratulating them on their elections. They were acknowledging, from the continent of Africa, to Asia-Pacific, to South and Central America, to the halls of Eastern Europe and beyond, and any other place I have not mentioned, that America would comment, either in the United Nations or elsewhere, on its disappointment on how countries treated their people.

Before this recess wherein we will be working with our constituents, we were working very hard to do one thing. Not to undermine the executive branch. There are three branches of government. I pride myself in the acceptance of the Constitution, I guess because my predecessor was the Honorable Barbara Jordan. She trained us well, as she held up that book during the Watergate proceedings, that this was not personal; it was that she was not going to see the Constitution and the rights of the people diminished.

That is where I stand today. This is not a personal commentary on the executive, meaning the branch that is called the executive, or a commentary on the branch that is the legislature or the judiciary, but it is a critique, and it is to recognize that they have failed.

And so I was disappointed when there was no bill dealing with the protection of the special counsel, Special Counsel Mueller in this instance, but this bill is not directed toward a name. It is to ensure that, if we select a special counsel, there be the guidelines and protections that do not subject that office to the whims and personalities of those who feel, "I am being investigated."

Wouldn't all of us like to be able to stand and block anyone who makes us uncomfortable?

My bill, H.R. 3654, will now be at the desk for a discharge petition. It is a simple bill that is not an angry bill. It is to limit the removal of a special counsel and for other purposes. It complements the bill of Mr. COHEN of Tennessee. His bill deals with the after-review of a firing. H.R. 3654 deals with the initial attempt to fire, so as not to disrupt the investigation.

What would be required is that this individual would have the opportunity, if they were sought to be removed, to file an action in the district court, only if the Attorney General would do so, the district court of the District of Columbia, and file a contemporaneous notice of action with the Committee of the Judiciary in the House and Senate. Therefore, the court would have to determine whether there was cause for this individual to be removed, and that cause would include misconduct, dereliction of duty, incapacity, conflict of interest, or other good cause in violation of the policies of the Department of Justice—simple, not punitive, but factual.

There was no reason why the omnibus could not have included a simple summary or a simple statement of that fact. One would argue, or one would raise the question: Why?

Well, the question is well explained. The most immediate are the rumblings coming from the White House and the White House counsel about Director Mueller's investigation should end; Director Mueller is conducting a witch hunt; Director Mueller has 13, or whatever number, Democrats and no Republicans; Director Mueller is, in essence, not doing what he is supposed to do.

I would take issue with that, and I would take issue because the investigation started with the collusion question with the Trump campaign. Unfortunately, the heightened question has grown exponentially since the beginning of the current Presidential administration. It has grown in such a way that it causes you to have a number of questions.

The intelligence community, in January of 2017, stated that Russian efforts to influence the 2016 U.S. Presidential election represent the most recent expression of Moscow's long-standing desire to undermine the U.S.-led liberal democratic order, but these activities demonstrated a significant escalation in directness, level of activity, and scope of effort compared to previous operations.

I applaud the omnibus bill, for it enhanced, by millions of dollars, the amount, which I supported, that will be used for election security in 2018. It is confirmed that the Russians are continuing their interference and, as well, that they plan to continue it in 2018 and 2020.

As we well know, the company based in Europe that snatched and used the technology of Facebook and the data of

millions and millions of Americans in an abusive manner and to skew the election toward one candidate versus another—in this instance, the Trump campaign—we know that that is still an open book. The company still exists. We know as well, even though the CEO was suspended, to the applause of the CEO and leader of Facebook, who has expressed his concern, that this is still a real possibility. We look forward to Mr. Zuckerberg engaging with the United States Congress and also the creativity to deal with that crisis.

But the ICA, intelligence community, assesses that Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016—let me be very clear, ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. Presidential election—not stood by as a leader of a particular nation and ignored, if you will, the individuals who were doing it but, in fact, ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. Presidential election. Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process, denigrate the former Secretary of State, and harm her electability and potential Presidency.

The intelligence community further assesses that Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for our President-elect, who is now the President of the United States. The ICA has high confidence in these judgments.

The intelligence community also assesses Putin and the Russian Government aspired to help elect the present President and to increase that President-elect's chances, Mr. Trump, when possible, by discrediting the former Secretary of State and publicly contrasting her unfavorably to him.

Now we know Putin has been attempting to do this for a long time. In 2014, the Russian Government pursued a campaign called The Translator Project, which endeavored to use social media to manipulate and engage in information warfare, plain and simple. And as I will mention later, Putin has been engaged in truly despicable acts for many years. But since before the election and over his time in office, the President has never criticized him.

Now, the basis of not criticizing another head of state is not the basis of Special Counsel Mueller's investigation, and I am glad of that. Because you disagree with a personality or someone's behavior, that is not what should be the basis of any investigation. But let me give you what the special counsel has accomplished in the time that he has been engaged in the work that he was assigned to do.

Madam Speaker, I would inquire of the time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. TENNEY). The gentlewoman from Texas has 40½ minutes remaining.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I think I was in the middle of saying that, because of different personalities or the different way that an individual leads, that is not the basis of anyone having to be investigated.

I was talking earlier about The Translator Project. We know that Mr. Putin has been attempting to intrude in our elections for a very long time, and in 2014, the Russian Government pursued a campaign called The Translator Project. This is the Russian Government's campaign, not the campaign of the United States, which endeavored to use social media to manipulate and engage in information warfare, plain and simple.

□ 1400

They, obviously, were more than successful in the 2016 election. And as I will mention later, Putin has been engaged in—I said this before, but it is worth repeating—truly despicable acts for many years.

I just paused for a moment to say that many people don't realize the kind of direct involvement that Vladimir Putin has over the most minute things happening in Russia as it pushes out to what is perceived as Russia's enemies.

The Russian people are wonderful people. I look forward always to engaging with them. There is a large Russian population in Texas and all over the Nation. We welcome them who have come, some fleeing persecution, others in other matters. But I think it is important to note that there are Russian spies here in the United States every day trying to co-opt and turn an American citizen to work for them.

Tragically, there were any number of individuals, seemingly, that wound up in the campaign of Mr. Trump that warrants investigation by Mr. Mueller.

These despicable behaviors are not just with elections, because elections are won and lost. We don't like losing elections. But if we do lose them, we like to lose them fair and square. When you run for President of the United States, you run on your own merits, your own strategy, your own outreach, your own missteps and mishaps. But how impossible is it to run when a foreign nation is conspicuously, with money, collaborating and working to skew the election to one candidate versus another?

Now, let me be very clear. This is not looking backwards. Nothing I say today will alter who the President is of the United States, and as Americans, we adhere to the order of government, regular order. That gives me such great pride that we are not a nation that marches up to the home of the executive and asks—or not asks—but demands that person leave in a coup d'etat. That is not the American way. But it does bear well that we know who we are dealing with, and that we are honest about the fact that the election was turned and won on a simple fact, not three States, or not—I didn't go there—not who is a blue collar and who is not—because I love all of the people. It was squarely skewed because of the direct intrusion of Vladimir Putin and his data. And the question is: What kind of collusion, collaboration, or criminal elements happened?

But in the course of those kinds of actions, I would make the point on my comment about truly despicable acts. How do you welcome, guarantee, give applause to an individual whom I am glad to say that the former President Obama stared down in the midst of our election and said, "Cut it out," cut it out from interfering in our elections? And from the words and the reaction of Mr. Putin, I didn't see a denial. I didn't see a: Hey, let's sit down and talk about it; if you think I am doing this, let me find out who is doing this in my country and I am putting a stop to it immediately.

None of that happened. It continued to intrude, and skew, and manipulate the data of millions of Americans of what they were receiving on Facebook, and many others who were getting poison pills in their inboxes about the election, skewed against the former Secretary of State.

It never stopped. But at the same time, the ions and ions of persons who disappear in Russia, who are imprisoned in Russia, and the individuals, the long list of individuals who have been poisoned, I have met with some of them; miraculously, even one who was poisoned and survived, was still fighting for human rights, went back again, and, as my memory serves me, was poisoned again.

But his passion for civil rights and human rights and saving Russia, the beautiful Russia that he loved, and bringing her into the 21st century, made him drive toward the danger.

But what about right now in the last 2 months? Not on Russian soil, but on our friend's, Great Britain, in London, two Russians: one a father, one a daughter. The daughter left Russia to celebrate or to visit her father. Poisonous gas took them down. Took them down. No mea culpa. No comment.

I thank Prime Minister May for standing up and saying, eye-to-eye: You will not do this in my country. I believe it is important for our foreign policy to be both diplomatic but forceful. For if you are in meetings with Russians who are able to speak openly, they will tell you that Vladimir Putin listens to nothing but power. Not any glad-handing, and I am a genius, and he is a genius, and he called me a genius. He doesn't respond to that. He only responds to looking you in the eye and showing that you have power.

And as I just heard over the last couple of days, most of the Russian people don't have internet. They can only hear what is given to them. They don't see what is going on. And they are living in their world without the exposure to the beauty of democracy, the beauty of human rights, and women's rights, and the freedom to go anywhere I want to go. And they get their thrills through what is told to them, to maybe the wins and losses in an Olympic game, or the exploits and expeditions of their leader who they just voted for. Maybe that is the level of their excite-

ment. I don't believe, however, that we as Americans can fall into that trap.

In the instance of the Commander in Chief, he refuses to criticize the geopolitical belligerence of Vladimir Putin and the Russian Federation. And to add insult to injury, just this week, as I indicated, here comes a congratulations on an election that many observers of elections admit was rigged. I think we all saw a video where it looked like someone was stuffing the ballot box. I have no reason to know why it was stuffed, but the opponent was popular that was running, but, of course, that opponent did not win.

But I just step back for a moment on despicable acts. I have been to Ukraine. It broke my heart to see the war that was going on, Russian-backed rebels, and to have the representation that the small part did not want to be in Ukraine, so Vladimir Putin was not going to encourage the unity of Ukraine. They were going to implode Ukraine. Let them fight. But how sad that he was never held accountable for the shooting down of a civilian airplane full of hopeful travelers, baby shoes, and suitcases of hopes and dreams.

That is what we are contending with. And that is why the overall investigation of Director Mueller is not personal. It is not purposely chosen to pick on an executive that someone does not like. It is done for the integrity of this Nation.

Let me tell you how we can look back over more recent actions. Russia occupied cities in the Republic of Georgia in 2008. They have imprisoned and suppressed journalists and dissidents. They have been so brazen so as to use, as I just said, a nerve agent, a chemical weapon on the soil of our great ally, a true partner for peace and progress.

Look at the actions that we took, including Russia, in Syria when the charges were using a nerve gas. What deadly silence from this executive, this administration, except for some other line officers—not lying, line, l-i-n-e—who probably said some things. They were obstructive in President Obama's efforts to bring peace in the devastating civil war in Syria by propping up Assad, which had killed untold numbers of people, including so many innocent children. That gas was used many years ago.

In an even greater escalation, they launched a missile at a civilian passenger plane, killing 298 on board, Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, as I said.

While they were doing all this, the Russians were impervious to criticism, beyond reproach, as far as they were concerned. Power is what they understand, firmness and sternness, and a solid policy. Oh, we will negotiate. We will deal with diplomacy, but you have to stop your bad behavior.

While they were doing all this, people were suffering. In 2011, Russians went to the polls for seats in the Duma. After the election, there were allegations and questions surrounding the integrity of the vote. This soon turned to

protest. Mr. Putin, for some bizarre reason, blamed the former Secretary of State for this. This has been a grudge he has held against her, and he was committed to doing anything to destroy her.

The former Secretary has said before on the floor of the Chamber—or I have said—she is a stateswoman. If the words that she provided gave any comfort to those protesting, that is fair game. There were no weapons. There was no nerve gas. It was people clamoring and holding on to positive words by a person of status during the time of her leadership that what was happening in Russia was wrong.

And the reaction of President Putin should have been, let me move my nation into the 21st century, let me not attack a woman of stature and excellence, a true public servant. Because she was not shy to point out injustices and improper behavior, which we should do for despots around the world.

While she was Secretary of State, this body passed and Obama signed the Magnitsky Act which imposed sanctions on many Russian oligarchs, long overdue. 2013 was a big year for the United States' relationship with Russia. It was in 2013 that Secretary Clinton left her post. Also in 2013, a company named the Internet Research Agency registered in Russia, and they are a social media troll farm. The IRA would form the basis of the translator project announced in April 2014.

The IRA's job is to spread disinformation and misinformation through fake social media profiles. They were at their peak in the 2016 election. This was done in order to manipulate public opinion and engage in information warfare.

Later that year, the present President decides to have a beauty pageant. While in Moscow in November 2013, Donald Trump meets with Agalarov and Rob Goldstein in order to try to build a tower in Moscow. The sanctions President Barack Obama imposed following Russia's annexation of Crimea stopped the Trump Tower deal.

How dare anyone say that the past administration was weak on Russia. Yes, power is what they understand. But it has to be a persistent, determined power, not power that is stopped by a new election. I assume this was not a happy time for those who wanted that Trump Tower.

While this was going on, the present President is developing a track record, trafficking conspiracy theories for his birtherism, the ugly smear that Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States, was not born in the United States, and, therefore, was ineligible to be President.

I watched this smear through videos and interviews, and just to the point that many of you recall, that in the midst of his Presidency—only because he desired to do so—President Barack Obama showed his birth certificate. What an ugly attack.

I was also there at the television, radio, and journalists event when both

President Obama and the present President were there. When the President—with a sense of humor—had a video played of "Lion King" and said to the laughing audience: There is my birth place.

□ 1415

I am glad he had a sense of humor, but it was an ugly attack on a legitimate President of the United States who will have a wonderful history to look back on.

The present President rode this lie of his birth—President Obama's birth and concluded he could use it to win the Republican nomination for President, so he announced it. And in that announcement, he dismisses Mexicans as drug dealers and rapists.

Everyone has all kinds of people as their neighbors, and who would ever say that?

But shortly after his announcement, questions about his connections to Russia continued. It is right around then, in September 2015, the Democratic National Committee is told that its computers have been hacked.

Despite all the information that we knew and, more importantly, all the information that only Donald Trump knew, he continued to deny any involvement with Russia.

Meantime, corporations were gathering the information of Americans through Facebook and poisoning the well, and sending biting, wrongheaded misinformation to many voters all over the Midwest and elsewhere.

While he was denying his connections to Russia, we now know that agents working with this President, Michael Cohen and Felix Sater, were trying yet again to build a tower in Moscow.

Let me repeat this fact. While he was actively running for President of the United States, there were business agents actively pursuing a real estate project in Russia and denying it.

As I have said in my commentary, it is well known that the only thing that Vladimir Putin understands is power; and any time you are going to beg, you can be assured he will use that against you or use that to manipulate you and anyone else that is associated with it.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the safety and security of the American people. This Congress should be concerned. Republicans should be concerned. Today, I said that the investigation by Special Counsel Mueller is not a red line being drawn or a blue line. It is red, white, and blue lines, which represent the American people.

None of us should, for political reasons, attempt to quash the truth. And the truth about Mr. Putin is all he wants is power, and all he wants is to dominate the democracy and the greatest democracy in the world, and to quash the leadership position that America holds, and the admiration that the world has for America, and the desire for most of the world not to be Russia, but to be America. And all we do is fuel his ability by subordi-

nating ourselves to him, his so-called greatness, his phony election, and his tampering with our election.

This is a difficult time. Many of you remember the name of General Flynn. He was a senior adviser to the Trump campaign, and one of his most unfortunate episodes was his time at the Republican National Convention, shouting "Lock Her Up, Lock Her Up."

That might be the core reason why some of my colleagues, even today, are sneaking through a subpoena to try and sneak through and bring back documents to attack the former Secretary again, a unilateral subpoena, not one that was joined in or even asked to be joined in by Democrats and Republicans. That is unfortunate because we have never, in the Judiciary Committee, issued subpoenas without a vote.

But now, to make havoc because of the very fine work of Special Counsel Mueller, it is going to be a tit for tat. So here we are with the tit for tat.

But if we recall, in December 2015, Mr. Flynn went to Moscow, sat at a dinner with Mr. Putin and Jill Stein, the 2016 Green Party candidate, to mark the 10-year anniversary of RT, the Russian TV. Just months later, in February 2016, the Translator Project, the endeavor to weaponize social media information revealed their theme, to support a number of candidates and to ruin the former Secretary.

March 2016 was a critical month, too. March 2016 was the month when the campaign manager of the former Secretary had his emails hacked. March 2016 was also when the present President had a meeting of his national security team. Present was this famous man, George Papadopoulos, unfortunately, one of those indicted, sitting in a famous meeting of great leaders for national security and foreign affairs. He was a foreign affairs aide and even mentioned publicly as a great mind of foreign affairs by the present President.

But in May of 2016, he got drunk, a little inebriated at a London wine bar and told a diplomat of a friendly country of ours that the Russians had dirt on the former Secretary.

Then, in June 2016, we have the infamous Trump Tower meeting, where operatives of the Trump campaign were told about derogatory information about Russia, and one of them said, famous words: "I love it."

At the GOP convention, the GOP actually changed its platform to be more friendly to Russia, a foreign despotic power that is aggressive around the world, that has shot down airplanes, support rebels to undermine governments, and even prop up the leader in Syria as people die in the streets.

It is a question of how a Republican platform at their convention, quite contrary to all of what most know of Republicans, to be friendly, and have a friendly pro-Russian platform, and friendly to a Ukraine that would oppress her people.

Then, after another operative name appears on foreign logs, that person resigned from the campaign. Another Trump associate encourages WikiLeaks to hack the Clinton emails. We know this because we have heard of direct messages between WikiLeaks and operatives of the Trump campaign. Their names are famous.

Even predicted that leaders of the former Secretary's campaign would have their time in the barrel. This tweet was sent on the same day as the infamous Access Hollywood tape, where Trump boasted about actions that all of us find appalling.

The election happens in the backdrop of the poisonous emails, the tampering by Russia, the spewing out of millions of Facebook connections, skewing the election, and the person they wanted to win wins. Yet, even after the election, the connections to Russia do not stop.

Rather than using the power that Putin needs to see from the United States to protect the American people, we just fall into the molasses and continue to throw sugar on this leader. We hire the National Security Advisor, who was sitting at the table with Mr. Putin. In some way related to advocating for Mr. Putin's high level of respect in the country, he was accused of lying to the FBI about meetings with Russians. When that news was made public, he was fired.

In between, of course, a person known as a public servant with no other agenda but to serve in the Department of Justice briefed the President of that information and other information 2 or 3 weeks before. They ultimately were fired, Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates, and it took a long time for there to be an acknowledgment to fire the National Security Advisor.

Don't you think Mr. Putin watches this and says, Boy are we successful? Boy, are we doing well?

We are not only inside the White House; we are entrenched.

After the former FBI Director testified that the FBI was investigating connections between the present President and the Kremlin, that same person who had offered a letter regarding the former Secretary a couple of days out of the election, an unheard action, and no pronouncement was made about other investigations regarding the present President, but, unfortunately, he was fired.

I want to pause for a moment. I have said that this cannot be about personalities or who has wronged one person or the other. I disagree with General Sessions. I disagree with his blocking of real, fair, criminal justice reform, his opposing civil rights, his supporting bad voter ID laws, his eliminating community consent decrees, and his attack on cities because they don't want to harm innocent families labeled the city as sanctuary cities.

But I would not hold to the position of supporting his firing, undermining the rule of law and the Constitution.

The law and the Constitution will be undermined if, for some reason, during this recess, while the special counsel is doing their in-depth work, that the Attorney General is fired, an interim appointment is made, that person fires the Deputy Attorney General, may fire the FBI Director, and may fire the special counsel. That is the midnight massacre of the 21st century, 2018.

I hope it does not happen. I hope that we, as members of the Judiciary Committee, today, in our press conference, have put the White House on notice; even though I understand now that one of the White House lawyers, Mr. Dowd, who was known as the reasonable lawyer, just resigned. That frightens me even more.

What more is going to happen? What else is going to be our lot?

That is why we have the discharge position on Mr. COHEN's bill and my bill, and my members will be getting letters to join those two bills together and sign them upon their return; though they can also ask their office to sign them, or they can be signed during the pro forma session.

This is the journey that we have taken. After former FBI Director testified that the FBI was investigating connections, I have said that, we note that that FBI Director was fired.

Thereafter, the special counsel was appointed because that is what you call obstruction of justice possibly. The special counsel was appointed to begin his investigation around that firing.

But if anyone understands prosecutors and special counsel, they can go where the facts lead them because they do not work for any elected officials. They work for the American people.

The special counsel was threatened by termination, as reported by the President, only to have this move blocked by the White House Counsel. Early in his tenure he was threatened with termination.

Last summer, the President indicated the special counsel should keep his family's private business dealings out of the investigation. Red line.

This month, Mr. Mueller subpoenaed business records from the Trump organization implicating the President's red line on the issue. This news coincides with an increase in erratic behavior, tweets. But most importantly, one of the lawyers saying, yes, it should end. He should be closed down.

The House Intelligence Committee singly, not in a bipartisan manner, decided to shut down the Russia investigation without any consultation with our friends on the other side of the aisle, the Democratic members.

Just as I indicated, a subpoena may be being issued by Republicans of my committee, the Judiciary, with no consultation of Democrats. We don't know what Mr. Mueller may discover, but we do know that there has been much discussion on a number of operatives.

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We also know that the minority had to release their own report for the

House Intelligence Committee. In the opening paragraph, it says: "The HPSCI majority's move to release to the House of Representatives allegations against the FBI and the Department of Justice is a transparent effort to undermine those agencies, the Special Counsel and Congress' investigations. It also risks public exposure of sensitive sources and methods for no legitimate purpose."

It goes on to say: "DOJ met the rigor, transparency, and evidentiary basis needed to meet FISA's probable cause requirement, by demonstrating: Contemporaneous evidence of Russia's election interference"—I am reading from an unclassified document concerning Russian links and outreach to Trump campaign officials—"Page's history with Russian intelligence"—and that, we would assume, would be Carter Page—and Carter "Page's suspicious activities in 2016, including in Moscow."

These are all individuals affiliated with the Trump campaign.

It further says: Christopher Steele's raw intelligence reporting did not inform the FBI's decision to initiate its counterintelligence investigation in late July 2016."

By the way, it reinforces my statement that they were investigating the Trump campaign. No one bothered to offer that in a public setting. That was seemingly unimportant to the American voters.

But this document is unclassified, and most Members have had a chance to peruse it, as I have done, and, frankly, it is tied up into our weak response to the despotism of Vladimir Putin.

So as I said, this is not about a personality challenge. It is important to take note of the fact that we have an obligation, just as the Cold War Presidents had an obligation, to protect the American people at what they perceived to be an attack from the Soviet Union, although they collaborated in World War II, the attitude changed. The people were frozen in time.

Those Presidents, Secretaries of State, Secretaries of Defense, although they did not clamor to go to war—and I, by no means, in this commentary today, in any way, am suggesting any form of war dealing with Russia. It is, though, saying that power must be met with power. Sanctions must be kept, and sanctions must be strong, and strong words must be clear.

Mr. Putin, your interfering with the elections and the desires and the decisions of the American people will stop. Your intelligence agencies and your operatives will be booted out, en masse, of the United States, and your attack, if you will, on individuals attempting to secure them as agents will cease.

I have every confidence in the intelligence community of this Nation. I do not look at them as political or partisan. From Mr. Clapper to Mr. Brennan, formerly, and to those who serve us now, their job is to tell the truth. In

fact, even those in the Trump administration, in the intelligence community, have enthusiastically and loudly declared that Russia interfered with the 2016 election, and they may and are preparing to do so in the 2018 election and 2020.

So the President's private behavior and efforts to cover it up have now generated three separate lawsuits. I don't particularly call upon that as a crucial element, except for those of us who know security and intelligence issues. Anything that can weaken you makes you vulnerable to individuals who need your information or need you to work for them. That is a well-known fact. If it is not well known, go to any spy movie and know that the vulnerability is what your operatives attack.

Now we have no fewer than three separate lawsuits dealing with his inappropriate behavior. In each case, his exposure grows. A particularly unseemly aspect of this silencing campaign is the enforcement of onerous nondisclosure agreements. So we will see a long journey of these particular items, these particular individuals coming before the cameras.

But I do want to say that there are women across the Nation who may not have this high-profile perpetrator, and I want to say to them and to the athletes who told their story in a Michigan courtroom that the Me Too movement is not temporary and fleeting, and the Me Too movement will continue to embrace you and secure you and safeguard you, and we hope that you will continue to do and tell the truth so that you can be healed and that you can be heard.

Over the last couple of days, the constant berating—constant berating of this special counsel has been frivolous, and let me tell you why. Although the special counsel has since indicted—or let me rephrase that. The special counsel is not doing frivolous work. The special counsel has since indicted three companies and 19 individuals, including the President's former National Security Advisor, his former campaign chairman, his deputy campaign chairman, and secured guilty pleas from five individuals, including three senior members of the Trump campaign. Trump continues to decry the special counsel's investigation as a hoax.

Republican colleagues would not even allow simple language in the omnibus bill to protect the special counsel to allow him to do his work; although, TREY GOWDY has indicated that his work should go on. And then, to attempt to suggest that the special counsel is going after him personally as a Republican, a Democrat, or that it is a witch hunt, I argue vigorously against it.

We need to find out the truth about Russia. We need to find out the truth about those who are surrounding this administration. We need to have an administration, whether it is his or anyone else, to be pure in their commitment to the American people. And the

truth should come out, and no one, regardless of their party affiliation, should try to undermine Special Counsel Mueller.

So I would make the argument: We leave on a recess; we are on our phones; we are on our emails ready to launch back to Washington to respond to any constitutional crisis; but over and above that issue, though that is juxtaposed right alongside, is the plea to this administration that we cannot and you cannot adhere to two leaders or two bosses. Either you adhere to the boss of the American people, whose safety and security are in your hands, or you play footsies with a dictator who is not unwilling to kill his own citizens with nerve gas on foreign soil.

Which will you choose, to be associated with this person who has wounded his own nation with human rights violations, women's rights violations, with an economy, with people locked up in jail, with family members who can never be found, with poisoning his own citizens, or are you going to stand with the American people and the men and women in the United States military who are on the front lines every day fighting against those despots and standing for the American people?

That is what we need to hear. And until we hear something different—and a mea culpa about the 2016 election, no one should put their hands on Director Mueller. All I can say is that his work should continue. I should not be involved with it; committees should not be involved with it; other leaders should not be involved with it.

Mr. Mueller should proceed with his work. It is painful. All of us would say so. But, frankly, it is the red, white, and blue. It is on behalf of the American people, Mr. Speaker.

And with that and my plea for power towards Mr. Putin on behalf of the American people and for dignity for this President on behalf of the American people, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### KENNEDY-KING NATIONAL COMMEMORATIVE SITE

Mr. CURTIS (during the Special Order of Ms. JACKSON LEE). Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 4851) to establish the Kennedy-King National Historic Site in the State of Indiana, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment thereto, and concur in the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

In section 3, strike subsection (d).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Utah?

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ESTES of Kansas). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor to address this Hallowed Hall, sometimes more hallowed than others, but today was a bit of a sad day for some of us. The Federalist reported the headline: Congress Rushes Towards Spending Vote to Prevent a Shutdown. "Congressional leaders released a \$1.3 trillion government spending plan for the rest of the fiscal year and asked lawmakers to begin voting on it with only hours to read and analyze the 2,232-page text.

"The measure is wide ranging, with funds for fencing on the U.S.-Mexico border, combating opioid addiction and building new roads, along with incentives to bolster reporting to a database for gun-buyer background checks."

I have got to assert, Mr. Speaker, that this fix NICS bill, as it's been called, leaves in place a practice that has been going on. It grieved me greatly that Republicans would rush to embrace this thing, which allows the practice that the Obama administration started that administrative procedures by unelected, unaccountable-to-voters bureaucrats could decide people were not, in their opinion, entitled to have their Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms.

We have heard accounts of people who didn't realize that they were being questioned in a way that would be used to take their guns away and their right to keep and bear arms to protect themselves, to engage in self-defense, and the VA is the most notorious. Simply asking a question like, "Who takes care of your checkbook finances?" and answer anything like, "Oh, my wife takes care of that," then a matter of weeks later, a letter is received saying you don't have a right to have a gun.

It is amazing that the Obama administration would start such an unconstitutional practice, and it is, to me, even more grievous that Republicans would participate in a bill that says it is going to correct a problem and make America safer when, actually, what it does will not make a difference in the mass shootings that have occurred.

But in the tradition of Congress, if there is a problem, too often people in this body feel it is not important that we do something that will make a difference; it is just important that we look like we are doing something. That is really where the fix NICS bill came into play.

It really wouldn't make people safer. It will add some restrictiveness, and it allows this heinous practice of having some bureaucrat at the VA just decide that a veteran who served his or her